

SUPERMARKET BUSINESS

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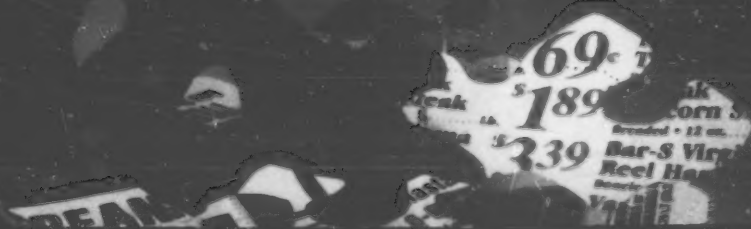
VOLUME 45/NUMBER 6
JUNE 1990

PRICES

SB SURVEY REVEALS
SHOPPERS THINK
THEY KNOW,
BUT USUALLY DON'T.

Those who shopped
true EDLP super
knew prices best.

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SUPERMARKET BUSINESS

JUNE 1990

VOLUME 45/NUMBER 6

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KEN PARTCH AND DAVID LITWAK

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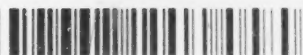
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THE MEANING BEHIND THE DATA



by Ken Parich,
Editor-in-Chief

The May issue of this publication contains the only survey that attempts to quantify the current practice of retailers and wholesalers demanding slotting allowances for new produce introductions. Many manufacturers refuse to pay slotting allowances, but do offer introductory allowances on a per case basis to all retailers and wholesalers alike.

The justification for the practice of asking for slotting allowances is, we are told by many retailers and wholesalers, and by spokespersons for Food Marketing Institute, that manufacturers, today, too often do not do their market research, and therefore, expect the retailer and wholesaler to absorb the cost of new product failures.

Be that as it may, the next obvious question is: Does that mean that if the manufacturer *does* do the marketing research and can prove good market acceptance, does he receive exemption from the slotting allowance? We heard of one manufacturer who asked this question of the buyer of a large eastern chain, and was told: "Oh, come on. That's just public relations."

So we asked the question again in our survey on slotting allowances. Actually, we made the statement: "Because of so many untested new products, slotting allowances are justified." Then we asked for agreement or disagreement, strongly or somewhat to that statement. The replies: Retailers—84% agreed strongly or agreed somewhat with that statement. Wholesalers—93% agreed strongly or somewhat. Manufacturers—90% disagreed somewhat or strongly (57% disagreed strongly).

Then we stated: "Slotting allowances

are not justified where positive market acceptance can be proved." The findings: Retailers—37% strongly disagreed, and 41% somewhat disagreed; Wholesalers—64% strongly disagreed, and another 22% disagreed somewhat. Of manufacturers, 80% agreed strongly.

Apparently there is a great deal of misunderstanding on this point. It would seem that there is no connection between testing or not testing new prod-

All the money—all the sales revenue in the system—is generated by the consumer. But there seems to be a reluctance to think of it that way.

ucts to either justify or not justify the slotting allowance.

As one head grocery buyer told us (but not for attribution), "Whether or not there is a slotting allowance connected to a new product has no bearing on whether or not we accept that product. All the other criteria for accepting or rejecting a new product still apply." Uh, huh.

Then, in all our follow-up interviews with retailers and wholesalers, we asked: If you have doubts about the potential performance of a new product, why don't you "just say no"? The answers we invariably received ranged from stuttering to voice disappearance to "Well, it's a very complicated subject." Or, "There's sometimes so much consumer advertising connected to it, and coupon drops..." And then it is left hanging.

But there is another statement in our

survey that received even more confusing replies. It is: "Consumers ultimately pay for slotting allowances and other distribution fees." Respondents had four choices: Not true, Somewhat true, Sometimes true and Always true. Retailer replies ranged from: Not true 9%; Somewhat true, 28%; Sometimes true, 22%; and Always true, 41%. Wholesaler replies were: Not true, 29%; Somewhat true, 13%; Sometimes true, 29%; and Always true, 29%. Manufacturers replied: Not true, 4%; Somewhat true, 32%; Sometimes true, 32%; Always true 32%.

We really didn't think that this was a trick question. We thought it might be a thought-provoking question that could lead to good discussion during follow-up interviews. It is curious that many respondents did not seem to realize that *all* the money, *all* the sales revenue in the system, is generated by the consumer. Perhaps there is a reluctance to think of it that way.

Finally, one statement received general support from all three industry segments, although there were differences in degree. The majorities of all three segments of the industry, to some degree, felt that greater enforcement of antitrust regulations would be beneficial to the industry.

Bob Aders, president of FMI, called for stronger enforcement of antitrust regulations at the WAFC meeting in Hawaii more than a year ago. It appears that the only strong opposition to antitrust enforcement stems from the regulators themselves. ■

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BY KEN PARTCH AND DAVID LITWAK



PRICES

HOW MUCH DO SHOPPERS REALLY KNOW...OR CARE?

Do you still try for the lowest prices in town? Our exclusive research shows that despite what shoppers say, shoppers really don't know the price of beans ... or of most items they buy.

A number of industry observers have told us that price changes are coming so rapidly that retailers often can't keep up with them. It is also hypothesized that this may be one of the reasons that so many so-called "scanning" scandal stories have appeared in the daily press of late (where prices at the scanner-register often differ from shelf or item prices).

With the proliferation of deals and allowances, double coupons, blizzards of free-standing inserts, the marketplace is awash with pricing static.

If these conditions are so, we

reasoned, then perhaps consumers are also confused about price. And if so—what are the implications?

Since grocery retailers have often lived in fear that the nearest competitor would be two cents cheaper on something or other in the weekend grocery ad, and since most weekly grocery advertising is heavily price-oriented, perhaps there was more fuss being made about price than anybody could reasonably justify.

Why not find out? Why not test how much consumers know—and don't know—about grocery prices?

supermarkets, we targeted two markets that we had previously studied, and in which we knew the prices being charged by the major stores in the area.

The markets in which we conducted the study were Birmingham, Ala. and Phoenix, Ariz. Birmingham was chosen because it is a relatively stable market, and a market where EDLP is well entrenched. Phoenix, on the other hand, is currently a very volatile market, with new players entering the area. EDLP is only being offered by a relatively few stores, while other stores are heavily promoting lower prices and sales.

Telephone interviews with the principal shopper in a total of 480 households in the two markets were conducted by two local independent market research firms. Shoppers were asked where they shopped, how they felt about various issues concerning price, and then were given a list of 25 common grocery items and were asked to give the prices for any items they regularly purchased.

What we found

The results of this study do bring home one cardinal rule of asking consumers questions: "What you hear is not necessarily what you get." This is clear from the way in which shoppers said they felt about price versus their behavior.

When asked, "How impor-

Do "everyday low prices" have more of an effect on consumers' ability to keep track of prices, compared with environments in which the prices are continually changing on account of specials? Are shoppers really going after sale items because they know the savings in the price they will pay?

Previous research studies have shown that only about half the shoppers coming out of a supermarket actually know the prices they just paid at the check stand. This finding was confirmed in a recent study conducted by Peter Dickson, Ohio State University, and Alan Sawyer, University of Florida, titled "The Price Knowledge and Search of Supermarket Shoppers."

"The most important finding is that 50 percent of the consumers were unaware of the price. So only one out of two shoppers was looking at the price," says Dickson.

"They are equally unaware of the price status of the items they bought. Only one out of two shoppers knew if it was the regular price or a special price."

With these problems and possibilities in mind, SUPERMARKET BUSINESS decided to follow up on its study of the viability of the Everyday Low Prices concept, and market pricing studies (see May, 1990 SB), by surveying shoppers on their attitudes towards pricing and their knowledge of prices.

In order to tie in the effects of EDLP and competition among

Shoppers have strong feelings about prices, but ...

How do the prices compare in the store(s) you shop most often with other stores?

	Total	Phoenix	Birmingham
Lower	23%	23%	21%
Competitive	52	48	58
Slightly higher	11	11	9
Regular prices higher, but good specials	8	8	8
Higher	2	2	4
Don't know	4	8	

Does the store(s) you shop feature "Everyday Low Prices"?

	Total	Phoenix*	Birmingham*
Yes	49%	33%	72%
No	38	54	16
Don't know	13	13	12

*Note: 70% of the Birmingham shoppers listed a store that does actually offer "Everyday Low Prices" as the store they shop most often.

**Only 7.8% of Phoenix shoppers listed a store that does actually offer "Everyday Low Prices" as the store they shop most often. An additional 26.4% shop Fry's most often, which has a low price policy, but also offers double coupons.

Do you shop at another supermarket if it offers good specials or a lot of items on special during a particular week?

	Total	Phoenix	Birmingham
Yes	37%	39%	34%
Sometimes	21	21	20
No	42	40	46

How important is price to you when deciding where to shop for groceries?

	Total	Phoenix	Birmingham
Extremely important	49%	43%	58%
Somewhat important	35	41	25
Not very important	11	11	10
Not at all important	5	5	6

tant is price to you in deciding where to shop?" 49 percent said it was extremely important, and 35 percent said it was somewhat important. This indicated that price should be the single most important factor for these shoppers.

Interestingly, in Birmingham, where EDLP is strong, 58 percent thought price was extremely important, as opposed to only 43 percent in Phoenix, although the mean income of our sample in Birmingham was only slightly lower than that of the Phoenix sample.

Responses to other questions seem to indicate that while price is important, it is not of the paramount importance that consumers seem to say it is.

When asked if they shop at a store other than their regular supermarket if that store is having specials on a lot of items they buy, only 37 percent said yes. An additional 21 percent said sometimes, but 42 percent indicated that they would not switch to another store for a par-

ticular shopping trip just to get the special prices.

There were no differences in the responses from Birmingham and Phoenix. Therefore, according to our "expert shoppers," store loyalty is not easily given up for special sales—indicating that once you get the shopper to be a regular patron, you have that shopper for quite awhile, unless you do something to lose him.

This concept is somewhat different from conventional thinking on competition. You may be more likely to lose a customer because of something you do, or fail to do correctly, than because of something your competition does to entice them away.

"If you want to influence a shopper, do it when they initially get into the neighborhood," suggests Dickson. "Once they get into their shopping habits, either in terms of store choice or the way in which they shop a store, it's hard to change them.

Prices change too often for shoppers to know current prices.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total	29%	37%	26%	8%	3%
Phoenix	19	35	32	6	3
Birmingham	42	33	14	5	6

Prices change too often to be justified.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total	30%	33%	23%	8%	6%
Phoenix	21	32	29	10	8
Birmingham	43	33	13	5	6

Retailer is making too much money on the grocery bill.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total	30%	30%	19%	7%	14%
Phoenix	27	26	21	7	16
Birmingham	33	39	15	3	10

Manufacturer is making too much money on the grocery bill.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total	29%	34%	16%	6%	15%
Phoenix	26	32	19	5	18
Birmingham	33	36	11	8	12

Manufacturers are introducing too many new products that aren't really new or necessary.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Total	41%	25%	20%	6%	8%
Phoenix	36	27	24	6	7
Birmingham	48	22	13	4	13

"It's well worth the initial investment to get the customer when they enter the market, because you may have them for a long period of time."

Price is often one good way to get that new customer, along with location, convenience, service and variety.

Another indication that price may not be as big a factor as shoppers indicated is in how they rate the pricing policy at the store they shop in most often. Only 23 percent of the shoppers said that their store had lower prices than the other stores in their area.

The majority (52 percent) felt that their store was competitive, but not necessarily the lowest. Eleven percent even said that their supermarket's prices were slightly higher than the competition. Shopping at a store that had higher regular prices, but that offered a lot of good specials, only appealed to 8 percent of the shoppers.

Again, there were no differences between the responses in

the two cities we studied. This suggests that when it comes to behavior, shopping habits and choices do not differ according to whether a market is heavily EDLP or not.

The findings seem to point to the conclusion that consumers want to feel that they are getting a fair price or a good deal. They do not need the absolute cheapest price, as long as they are getting convenience, or quality, or service.

But it would be dangerous to overstate the lack of importance of price. After all, we did find that 50 percent of the people we interviewed (in the Dickson and Sawyer study) knew the prices.

"A lot of shoppers have to feel they are getting a reasonable deal on price. If they perceive that they you have screwed something up on price, they will go elsewhere," warns Dickson.

Shoppers, it seems, are very opinionated when it comes to price issues. For instance, the majority of shoppers agree that

... many don't really know what they are paying.

Item	PHOENIX			BIRMINGHAM		
	% Purchasing	%* Who Think They Know Prices	%** Guessing The Correct Price	% Purchasing	%* Who Think They Know Prices	%** Guessing The Correct Price
Whole milk (gallon)	49%	96%	35%	66%	66%	72%
Iceberg lettuce (head)	79	94	73	83	83	30
Bananas (1 lb)	79	92	83	90	80	68
Rice Krispies (13 oz)	24	84	42	28	75	60
White bread (1 lb loaf)	57	98	24	75	89	46
National brand frankfurters	50	93	55	46	85	65
Oscar Mayer bacon	27	92	32	34	74	47
Local brand chicken breasts (lb)	51	80	22	44	68	42
Chicken of The Sea tuna (6½ oz)	42	97	90	52	77	49
Lean Cuisine (Glazed Chicken)	11	84	32	19	63	43
Kraft American Singles (16 oz)	50	85	19	62	65	20
Canned cat food (6 oz)	14	100	70	15	73	37
Butter (1 lb)	31	94	53	64	75	71
Dry dog food (10 lbs)	18	94	28	35	67	18
Minute Maid orange juice (12 oz frozen)	36	90	36	41	66	53
Del Monte Green Beans (8½ oz)	46	93	38	52	69	45
Birds Eye Frozen Vegetables in Sauce	20	70	31	23	61	39
Jeno's Frozen Pizza (7.4 oz)	18	94	37	26	85	43
Campbell's Tomato Soup (12¼ oz)	61	89	31	63	83	74
Best Foods mayonnaise (1 qt)	44	79	75	15	33	19
Coca-Cola (2 litre)	45	94	72	61	80	70
Maxwell House coffee (lb)	30	96	36	37	78	47
Liquid laundry detergent (½ gal)	21	80	37	20	70	45
Ground chuck steak (lb)	48	85	47	48	96	71
Crest toothpaste (6.4 oz)	44	81	48	46	74	60

*Based on Percent of those purchasing.

**Based on percent of those purchasing. The range of prices being charged by the market leaders at the time of the survey was used, plus a 5% grace range.

Most shoppers thought they knew what prices they had paid, but relatively few actually did—though price recall in the EDLP market was somewhat better.

prices change too often to keep up with, or to be justified. Shoppers in Birmingham agree with these statements even more than those in Phoenix—which is surprising, given the high penetration of EDLP in the Birmingham market.

When it comes to making money, shoppers think, (surprise!) that both the manufacturer and the retailer are making too much of it. They also agree that manufacturers are introducing too many "new" products that aren't really new.

Shoppers don't know the price

The time has come to separate the men from the boys, the shoppers from the buyers. Taking a page out of daytime TV, we played *The Price Is Right* with the shoppers of Phoenix and Birmingham—and almost nobody won.

Of the shoppers who regularly purchased each of the 25 grocery products on our list, most thought that they knew the correct price. This is especially

true in Phoenix, where for most of the items, over 90 percent of the purchasers believed they knew the prices they were paying. In Birmingham most of the items only inspired confidence among 60 percent to 85 percent of the purchasers.

To fairly measure who actually knew the price of an item, we decided to give the shoppers a reasonable amount of latitude. Instead of making them give us the exact price charged at the store in which they regularly shopped, we accepted any price that was within 5 percent of the range of prices charged for that item by the market leaders in that city (five retailers in Birmingham, seven in Phoenix).

All this was done to counteract the effects of advertised prices in the market, and general confusion based on "price-noise."

Despite these efforts to help the shoppers get the right answers, less than 50 percent of the shoppers surveyed knew the correct price for the vast major-

ity of items they bought. Far more people thought they knew the price than actually did.

In some cases, prices of items that are more often on special, such as Coke or tuna, were remembered more accurately than some of the others, but not often enough to allow any concrete conclusions to be drawn.

EDLP seems to have a positive influence on price recall. Generally, shoppers in Birmingham had higher price recall than did their Phoenix counterparts—despite having less confidence that they knew the prices.

This could be a result of there being less price advertising and fewer specials in that market—and thus, less "price-noise."

One final note worth mentioning is that, for the majority of items, the prices given by shoppers were lower than those they had actually paid. This may mean that once shoppers established a reference price for an item, they tended not to pay very much attention to price increases for that item. ■

In a move that may have national implications, New York legislators have devised measures to cut teenagers' working hours, and possibly tie employment to school progress.

TYING LEARNING TO EARNING

BY MIKE DUFF

Two bills under consideration by the New York State Legislature, which would restrict working hours for employees under 18, may portend a labor crisis for supermarkets already having trouble finding workers.

One bill, introduced by Sen. James Lack (R-Suffolk) and under consideration in the state senate, would cut the maximum hours that 16- and 17-year-old employees could work per week from 48 to 28 when school is in session.

The bill, based on recommendations from a committee formed by Gov. Mario Cuomo, also would restrict the time students could work on days before school days to four hours—a standard that now applies to 16-year-olds—and to no later than 10 p.m., rather than midnight, as currently is allowed. But the provisions about hours before school days still may be subject to compromise to allow longer work days on Sunday.

The second measure, being developed by Assemblyman Frank Barbaro (D-Brooklyn) has not yet been introduced and still is under discussion. But the centerpiece of the legislation is a proposal to tie the ability to work with an employee's academic progress.

Coming on the heels of the United States Department of Labor's drive to boost enforcement of child labor laws nationally, the initiatives are likely to gain the attention of lawmakers, educators and union officials nationwide who wish to restrict working hours of high school age part-timers.

Not surprisingly, the New York State Food Merchants Association and several super-

market companies are actively opposing the measures. The association and supermarket operators—including Ron Springer, manager of human resources for Hannaford Bros.; William Vitulli, vice president of community and government relations for A&P; and Tom Reilly, assistant to the director of personnel and labor relations, King Kullen—testified against the Lack bill at hearings held in Albany on Jan. 30 and in New York City on Feb. 5.

Organizing resistance

Connie Barrella, director of political programs for NYSFMA, is organizing supermarket industry opposition to the measures. She believes that in this situation, as in the case of New York's beverage container deposit law, supermarkets are being asked to bear the brunt of reforms designed to ease social problems they haven't caused.

"This bill is heavily weighted toward labor and educational concerns," she says. "It looks like the education lobby is look-

ing for someone to put the blame on for poor student performance. This all makes good press. But supermarkets can't get people to work now, and the state can't enforce existing child labor laws. We're talking about children bagging groceries—not sweatshops, which exist in this state. We don't want to see a change. We want to see more enforcement of existing laws."

Enforcement is a key issue for supermarket operators who argue against the measures. According to Bill Vitulli of A&P, proponents are emphasizing child labor law violations to justify more restrictive legislation. But if current laws can't be enforced, more restrictions only make policing the system more haphazard—not to mention the potential harm that may do to the families whom, ultimately, the legislation hopes to protect.

"Why make it more stringent?" he asks. "Everyone's heard about the violations Elizabeth Dole (U.S. Secretary of Labor, and initiator of the Labor Department's upgraded en-

On the basis of studies, educators are pointing to about 20 hours a week as the maximum time the average student should spend pursuing non-school activities.

Average Proficiency for Eleventh Graders by Hours Worked*

Hours Worked ¹	Mathematics	Science	History	Literature	Reading
None	307	292	288	289	57
Less than 6	309	299	292	291	58
6-10	307	296	287	288	57
11-15	309	299	291	290	58
16-20	308	297	289	289	57
21-25	303	293	281	281	55
26-30	299	285	276	277	54

*The proficiency scales for mathematics, history, literature, and science range from 0 to 500, while the reading scale ranges from 0 to 100.

forcement program) found. That's under the present law. What is the point of making it even tougher to comply? Don't pass legislation just for the sake of passing legislation. Get the people who are violating the laws to comply with them now.

"We've had no complaints regarding flexibility of hours. There's no evidence anyone's been hurt working these hours. For generations, the supermarket industry has provided work for young people. It provides college tuition. It helps pay household expenses. Our feeling is that parents should determine what hours their kids can work. In many cases, parents need that income."

Vitulli says that A&P is careful to remind its store managers about the need to heed child labor laws because violations encourage the kind of legislation now under consideration. But if such measures are passed, he says, consumers will bear the burden of increased labor costs and less service.

"The impact on our operation would be severe," says Vitulli. "By cutting back on labor, service at the checkouts is going to be poorer. The shelves aren't going to be as well stocked, because these are the people we use along with the full-timers to get the job done."

"If you drive around New York or New Jersey, you see 'help wanted' signs all over the place. We have 24-hour operations. It's the part-timers that give us the flexibility of those working hours. And with labor representing about 66 percent of the cost of operating a supermarket, you need flexibility."

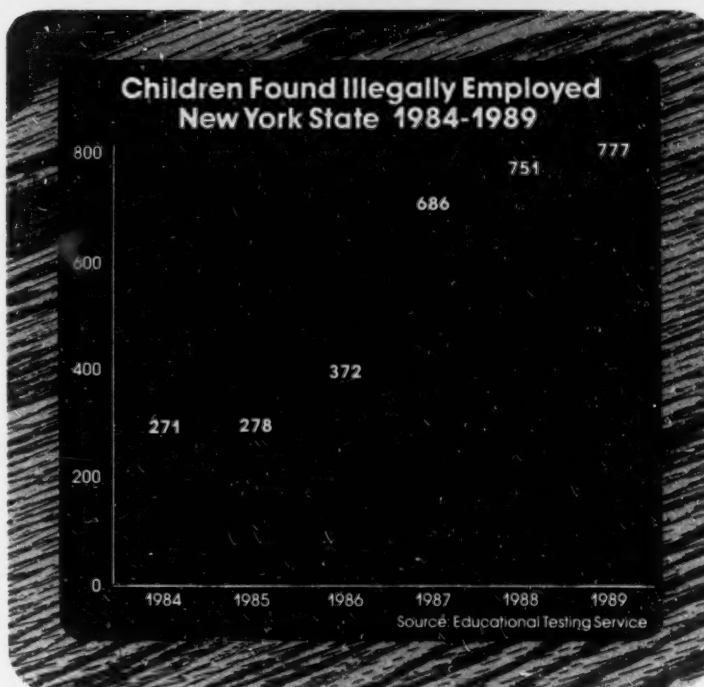
Starting on the right food

He adds that he and many other supermarket executives started out in their teens as part-time workers.

"So many of us worked part time at A&P while we were going to school," says Vitulli. "At the time I worked, my income was very necessary for my family. It certainly had no adverse effect. That's why we are opposing these changes. The laws as they exist now should be enforced."

In his testimony, Tom Reilly of King Kullen also pointed out the positive effects of working in the industry and negative effects on supermarkets and their customers of further restricting the labor pool.

According to Connie Varcasia, a legislative assistant to Sen. Lack, the intent of Lack's bill is to keep students focused on school. "The senator feels that the most important work of our youth is education," she



In spite of strong state regulations, more students are taking jobs in the "underground" economy, where safety isn't regulated.

says. "If students are working excessive hours when they are 16 or 17 years old, they aren't going to be able to avail themselves as well of the benefits of education."

She argues that the vocational benefits students gain at work are eroded by over-long hours. "They are going to need their education when they are adults in the work place."

Fatigue noted

George Mayer, a teacher in the Commack, Long Island school system who testified in favor of the Lack bill, says that out of a class of 25 students on any given day, he says 10 of those kids appear exhausted and, of those, eight or nine will have worked until 10 o'clock or later the night before.

Reilly notes that at the hearing, as with most such meetings, one side presented its arguments and studies, and the other disputed them. But the fact remains that in the absence of vigorous enforcement, new laws aren't going to work. Indeed, by tightening restrictions, the people who are adhering to the law will be dramatically affected, while chronic violators probably will continue with their current practices.

"The people who are out violating the law, fine, go after them," he says. "I'm sure there are people out there abusing the law, but the supermarket industry is working hard to monitor itself."

Proponents of the restrictive legislation point to studies that show that students who work

moderate hours—up to 20 hours a week—score higher on standardized tests than do students who don't work or those who work more than 20 hours.

Mayer, who is also president of the Commack Teachers Association and a member of the New York State United Teacher's Board of Directors, adds that, according to the studies he has seen, only one student in 10 saves money he or she earns during high school for future use. In the suburban school system where he teaches, students mostly work to earn pocket money for cars, clothes and partying.

Although he and the other advocates of restricted youth labor hours concede enforcement will be difficult, Mayer says that setting higher standards will make it easier to curb the worst abuses.

"Everyone becomes a little more scrupulous," he says. "The fact that enforcement is going to be difficult doesn't mean we shouldn't do it. It will make it easier to back abusers out of the scene."

Not only work studies point to 20 hours as the optimum amount of time students should devote to interests outside school, says Donna Lynch, a teacher at Shenendehowa High School, Clinton, N.Y., who also testified at the hearings. She says studies of athletes indicate they also should limit their sporting pursuits to about 20 hours a week, and she adds that teachers are looking at that time frame as a standard for most activities outside of school.

"It's discouraging to see kids fall asleep in class because they've worked too many hours," she says. "And when they're in trouble in class, but can't come in after school for extra help because they have to work."

Lynch says she hopes schools and businesses can form partnerships to monitor performance in school and at work so that students can be good workers now and in the future.

"Using such a system, we can send supermarkets students who are motivated, who don't have grade problems, who can manage their time and will show up to work," she says.

Given the right regulations and cooperation from business, high schools can set up programs that grant permission for students to work on the condition of academic progress, and that monitor students after they are employed. "We need businesses to say to young employees who are not doing well, 'You've got to work harder in school and to cut back on hours if there are problems.'"

Although she concedes that enforcing tighter regulations will be difficult, with both the federal and state governments slashing budgets, she hopes that programs can be developed that will aid students with pressing needs to work.

Many of the concerns cited as necessitating stricter employment standards for young workers reflect middle class, suburban situations, proponents of the legislation admit. But they hope that truly needy students, especially in the inner cities, can be dealt with on a case-by-case basis that takes into consideration their circumstances.

Critics of the legislation argue that cutting the hours students are eligible to work in legitimate jobs—such as are offered in supermarkets—will drive more kids into the underground economy, where they may be exposed to hazardous conditions and where they don't pay taxes. And, critics point out, such legislation could lead to more drop-outs.

That's why a spokesperson for Assemblyman Barbaro says he is approaching legislation tying job eligibility to academic performance slowly, trying to consider all aspects of the legislation's impact on high school students.

"That's why we're doing our review very carefully," says Shellie Melnick, a legislative aid to Assemblyman Barbaro. "We wouldn't want that to encourage anything negative." ■